

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-10 and 13-25 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, 10, 14, 22 and 24 are independent claims.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 22-25 are allowed. Claims 3-4 and 12-14 remain objected to, but allowable.

Claims 4 and 14 have been rewritten in independent form and should also be allowed.

35 U.S.C. § 102(e) REJECTION

Claims 1, 2, 5-11 and 15-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Dougherty et al. ("Dougherty" - U.S. Patent No. 6,198,509). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

With regard to the rejection of claims 1 and 10, while not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 10 have been amended to include the limitations of objected-to allowable claims 3 and 12, respectively, thereby automatically placing independent claims 1 and 10 into condition for allowance, along with their dependent claims.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and earnestly solicit an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final Rejection, in that it raises no new issues but merely places the claims in a form more clearly patentable over the references of record. In the alternative, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final Rejection in that it reduces the issues for appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Applicant(s) respectfully petitions under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and 1.17 for a two-month extension of time in which to respond to the

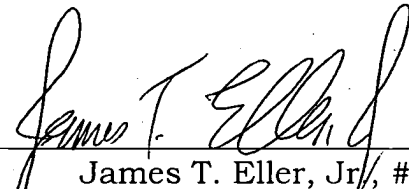
Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of \$420.00 is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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